GOVERNMENT OF INDIA
TOURISM AND CULTURE
LOK SABHA

UNSTARRED QUESTION NO:2843
ANSWERED ON:07.12.2000
REINSTATION OF EXHIBITION
BASUDEB ACHARIA

Will the Minister of TOURISM AND CULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the artists in Delhi protested against the action taken by the National Gallery of Modern Art by not allowing the exhibition reinstated;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the Director of NGMA had consulted the advisory committee before removing the painting; and

(d) if not, the reasons therefor?

Answer

MINISTER OF TOURISM & CULTURE (SHRI ANANTH KUMAR)

(a) to (d) : The exhibition `Combine - Voices for the New Century` included a painting with the `Ashoka Pillar`.Before the inauguration of the exhibition on 2nd September 2000, this painting evoked different opinions as to whether the painting is derogatory to National Symbols and whether such paintings should be exhibited in the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA), Delhi, which is a premier public institution. When it was suggested to the participating artists that the painting in question be set aside, the artists whose paintings were included in the exhibition, decided to withdraw the entire exhibition and removed the paintings erected on the walls of NGMA for the exhibition.This removal was also displayed on a few Television channels. The gallery, which had organised the exhibition and some of the artists, subsequently requested the NGMA for reinstating the exhibition in its totality including the controversial painting. As there was no change in the stance of the exhibitors, it was not found feasible to reinstall the exhibition without aggravating the controversy.

As the participating artists themselves withdrew the exhibition before its inauguration, the question of the Director, NGMA consulting the Advisory Committee did not arise.